

REMARKS

The applicant has carefully considered the Office action dated November 8, 2005, and the references it cites. By way of this Response, claims 21-23, 30, and 35 have been amended and claims 20, 27-29, and 43-45 have been cancelled without prejudice to their further prosecution. In view of the following, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Preliminary Matters

As an initial matter, the applicants note that claims 1-19, 24-26 and 36-42 stand allowed and are not further discussed in this paper.

As a second preliminary matter, the applicants note that the Office action indicated that claims 23 and 30-25 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. In keeping with this suggestion, the applicant has rewritten claims 23, 30 and 35 in independent form. Accordingly, as acknowledged in the Office action, claims 23, 30, and 35 and all claims depending therefrom are in condition for allowance and will not be further discussed herein.

Before leaving these claims, applicant notes that the amendments to claims 23, 30, and 35 were not narrowing. Indeed, those amendments changed the form of the claims, but did not change their scope in any respect. As such, the noted amendments do not create prosecution history estoppel or in any way limit the scope of equivalents of those claims.

As a final preliminary matter, applicants note that references C01 & C02, which were not considered by the Office, are cumulative to Oren,

Des.359,869, and O-Neill, US. Patent 5,930,854, which were considered in full by the Office.

Art Rejections

Turning to the art rejections, all of the rejected claims have been cancelled. Therefore, the art rejections are moot.

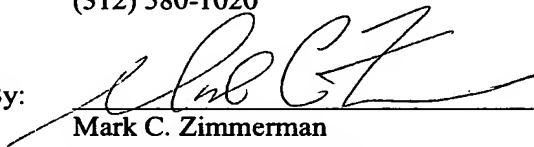
Before closing, the applicants note that the Office action did not address claims 46-48. It is respectfully submitted that claims 46-48 should be allowed.

If the Examiner is of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number identified below.

Respectfully submitted,

HANLEY, FLIGHT & ZIMMERMAN, LLC.
Suite 4220
20 North Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 580-1020

By:


Mark C. Zimmerman
Registration No. 44,006

February 8, 2006